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Voting in National and European Parliamentary Elections What Determines the Turnout Gap?¹

ROXANA NEDELESCU

INTRODUCTION

Electoral participation and voting decisions play an important role in the political process as it directly determines the electoral outcome and indirectly, it determines policies. Recent political economy literature focuses on individual voter preferences in order to understand turnout patterns.

A declining² voter turnout in most advanced industrial countries has been observed. Lijphart³ (1997) highlights the decline in turnout and implicit drawbacks as low turnout induces in a democracy a “systematically bias against less well-to-do citizens”. Furthermore, since governments pursue policies according to “objective economic interests and subjective preferences of their class defined core political constituencies”, “unequal participation spells unequal influence”. He also highlights that “turnout in midterm, regional, local and supranational elections – less salient but by no means unimportant elections – tend to be especially poor”. Therefore, significant variation in voter turnout exists both within and across elections⁴: electoral participation rates differ across election type as for example national versus local elections, and tend to increase along with the perceived importance of the election as higher participation rates are registered for national elections.

¹ The author is most grateful for valuable comments to Prof. M. Bordignon, Economics and Finance Department, Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan.

² Aina Gallego, “Where Else Does Turnout Decline Come From? Education, Age, Generation and Period Effects in Three European Countries”, *Scandinavian Political Studies*, vol. 32, issue, 1, 2009, pp. 23-44.

³ Arend Lijphart, “Unequal Participation: Democracy's Unresolved Dilemma”, *The American Political Science Review*, vol. 91, no. 1, 1997, pp. 1-14.

⁴ Andre Blais, *To Vote or Not to Vote: The Merits and Limits of Rational Choice Theory*, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, 2000.

The difference in turnout introduced the concept of “second-order⁵ elections”, characterized by a lower turnout and generally viewed as less important by parties, voters and the media, referred initially to the first European Parliament (EP) elections in 1979 and defined in a later stage as “All elections (except the one that fills the most important political office of the entire system and therefore is the first-order election), irrespective of whether they take place in the entire, or only in a part of the country”⁶. Furthermore, in “second-order” elections, it was observed that governing parties loose votes in favor of opposition as a form of voter’s protest against scarce performance, while small parties gain votes.

In this paper we consider these issues and investigate patterns in voter turnout both at European and National elections. We insist on the former election type as the European Parliament is the only EU institution directly elected by the EU citizenry and despite the fact that its powers increasingly grew in importance over time, the opposite happened with voter turnout: in 2014, it was registered the lowest turnout for the EP Elections, of only 42.6% (EP), while in 2009, 43% (TNS opinion & EP). Therefore, low turnout is a concern for policy makers since low levels of electoral participation in the European Parliament elections may accentuate the legitimacy and democracy problems at the European Union level. As such, it is important to understand why electoral participation at the European level is low and how it can be increased, given that increasing electoral participation may be a way of increasing EU’s legitimacy, driven by public support.

This research work aims at investigating voting turnout and behavior from two perspectives: individual and aggregate. We address several research questions and test the “second-order” theory: does lower turnout induce inequality in electoral participation and if that is the case, how is it mirrored by parties vote shares; what determines turnout and how can the electoral gap be explained and reduced: does politicians’ quality, electoral systems, party performance matter?

Empirical evidence highlights the difference in voters behavior across National and European elections as well as a steep gap between turnout. The European Parliament elections remain of a “second-order” nature. We also find that socioeconomic status has a significant role in explaining the EP electoral participation and that there exist a representation bias for the higher socioeconomic categories. When deciding to participate to the European elections, individuals assess the candidates’ personality, notoriety, experience

⁵ Karlheinz Reif, Hermann Schimdt, “Nine Second-Order National Elections: A Conceptual Framework for the Analysis of European Elections Results”, *European Journal of Political Research*, no. 8, 1980, pp. 3-44.

⁶ Karlheinz Reif, “European Elections as Member State Second-Order Elections Revisited”, *European Journal of Political Research*, vol. XXXI, no. 1, 1997, pp. 115-124.

and position in both National and European political scene, as well as the candidate and party position on EU politics. For the National elections, interest in politics increases significantly the probability of participating to National Elections.

Changing perspective from individual to aggregate level, we find that politicians voting across national lines instead of European party ideology decreases party vote share. Large parties, parties in net payer and euro zone countries lose votes across elections. Evidence does not show that the European elections are used strategically to punish governing parties.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 presents the descriptive statistics, while Section 3 presents the estimation strategy. Empirical results are given in Section 4, and Section 5 concludes. Full estimations results are given in the Appendix.

RELATED LITERATURE

Political participation is a basic democratic principle because through elections citizens choose and recognize the authority of decision-makers that legitimate them to govern. The role of political institutions, economic policies and their effects on the economy has been the focus of Political Economy studies from a macroeconomic perspective. Government's actions are analyzed depending on the political forces which enable them to be in power. From a microeconomic perspective, previous Political Economy studies focus on voters and their preferences. Since political parties, governments and policies are the equilibrium outcome of voters' decision-making⁷, two main questions are addressed: why, and how, voters vote.

In this paper, we will focus on the later question. However, “why” and “how” citizens vote are interconnected questions, as a person will vote strategically in order to incline the voting outcome in their favor. When comparing⁸ strategic with sincere non-voting, and distinguishing between little support for the EU (“I don’t like Europe”) and little policy appeal of political parties (“I do not have a reasonable choice”), as well as controlling for little support for national politics, little appeal for general parties (“There is no party I could support”), involvement (“I don’t care”) and lack of efficacy (“My vote does not matter”) empirical evidence does not support the strategic or sincere

⁷ David Austen-Smith, Jeffrey Banks, *Positive Political Theory I Collective Preference*, University of Michigan Press, 1999; *Idem*, *Positive Political Theory II Strategy and Structure*, University of Michigan Press, 2005.

⁸ Hermann Schmitt, Cees van der Eijk, “Strategic Non-Voting in European Parliament Elections”, Prepared for delivery at the 2001 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association in San Francisco, August 30 to September 2, 2001.

non-voting theory. Evidence is found for social characteristics, which seems to be a better predictor. In fact, Lijphart (1997) argues that poorer and less educated individuals are less likely to vote. Therefore, low voter turnout may induce unequal representation and may be in fact an important democratic problem which depends mainly on institutional mechanisms.

Using regional inequality and poverty indexes Jesuit⁹ (2002), estimate individual political participation in national elections as well as in the European elections. The analysis has at its basis the “regionalization” process within Europe, tracing its roots to the founding of the Community to present, having the Structural Funds as main policy instrument targeting regional disparities reduction. No negative effects of contextual poverty is found. However, among most important findings, individuals living in economically disadvantaged regions are more likely to vote in elections for the European Parliament. Also, low income and less educated persons are less likely to vote in either National or European Parliament election. Furthermore, the author analyzes the pros and cons of different voting systems such as proportional and compulsory voting: while the former stimulate voter participation through the richness of choice, the latter is definitively the most efficient and cost reducing, but has the disadvantage of forcing to vote individuals with little political interest which is even riskier.

However, structural factors¹⁰ have not influenced the decrease in European elections turnout. The countries joining the EU were different in terms of electoral systems. Correcting for turnout differences had the proportion of countries with compulsory voting been constant over time, little evidence is found in supporting the fact that compulsory-voting alone was driving high level of turnout in European elections.

Furthermore, there is a boost in electoral participation for the European Parliament for the newcomer States, which is lost in the following elections. An important factor is instead national elections proximity to the European elections that tend to induce a boost in the latter participation level. Therefore, EP elections may be solely a reflection of the national elections perceived importance, the low turnout suggesting that are not viewed as very important.

This is the one of components of the second-order election theory, founded by Reif and Schmitt (1980) and confirmed for all EP elections: European elections are influenced by the national election scene and are not as important. Voters use European elections as a protest against governing parties, while large parties loose votes across the two elections. In the literature, empirical evidence was found for the second-order theory, individuals switch-

⁹ David Jesuit, *Regional Economic Distress and Political Participation in National and European Parliamentary Elections in Western Europe*, Working Paper No. 281, 2002.

¹⁰ Mark Franklin, “How Structural Factors Cause Turnout Variations at European Parliament Elections”, *European Union Politics*, vol. 2, no. 3, 2001, pp. 309-323.

voting¹¹ across parties and elections. But voters also give importance to policy outcome. Second-order theory states that the EP elections are used to protest against governments in power¹². Using multivariate analysis, empirical evidence shows however that in the new Member States, citizens use EP elections to vote sincerely supporting their most preferred party, and not to protest against incumbent governments.

This result is strengthened by Weber (2007)¹³. He uses survey data for 1999 and 2004 European Parliament elections, insisting on party campaign mobilization. EP elections are found to be of second-order nature, but are not used for protesting against governing parties. Low turnout is due to the low party campaign mobilization. Compulsory voting, weekend voting and elections held simultaneously with EP elections increase turnout. EU-supportive countries as well as countries benefiting from the European integration process have a higher turnout¹⁴.

In order to obtain a complete picture of the factors influencing EP turnout and to disentangle among different motivations¹⁵ of EU support/aversion, several theories have been tested using 2009 survey data: performance, utilitarianism, negative affection, strengthening and identity. The main findings support the facts that low utility from European Union participation, negative affection towards the EU, opposing integration and absence of European Union identity decrease turnout at European level.

Furthermore, mass-media and elections visibility have an important role in explaining turnout differences across European and National elections. Empirical analysis based on the Eurobarometer Flash Survey referring to the 2004 EP elections, show that low voters mobilization¹⁶ is significant in explaining voters' turnout. Low-turnout in the European elections is due to the lack of party mobilization and avoidance of clear political position on policy-making at EU level (Weber, 2007). Therefore more involvement from parties

¹¹ Cliff Carrubba, Richard Timpone, "Explaining Vote Switching Across First- and Second-Order Elections Evidence From Europe", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 38, no. 3, 2005, pp. 260-281.

¹² Jason Koepke, Nils Ringe, "The Second-order Election Model in an Enlarged Europe", *European Union Politics*, vol. 7, no. 3, 2006, pp. 321-346.

¹³ Till Weber, "Campaign Effects and Second-Order Cycles: A Top-Down Approach to European Parliament Elections", *European Union Politics*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2007, pp. 509-553.

¹⁴ Daniel Stockemer, "Citizens' Support for the European Union and Participation in the European Parliament Elections", *European Union Politics*, vol. 13, no. 1, 2011, pp. 26-46; Mikko Mattila, "Why Bother? Determinants of Turnout in the European Elections", *Electoral Studies*, 22, 2003, pp. 449-468.

¹⁵ Joost van Spanje, Claes de Vreese, "So What's Wrong with the EU? Motivations Underlying the Eurosceptic Vote in the 2009 European Elections", *European Union Politics*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2011, pp. 405-429.

¹⁶ Susan Banducci, "Turnout in the 2004 European Parliamentary Elections: Campaigns and the Mobilization of Eurosceptic Voters". Paper prepared for presentation at the Institute for Governance Conference, Workshop Innovation of Governance, June 16-17, 2005, Universiteit Twente, Enschede, The Netherlands.

and more media coverage on the European elections might increase the number of voters as more informed voters are more likely to vote (Bilska, 2011). These results indicate that lack of information, either due to lack of interest or lack of knowledge, decrease EP elections turnout.

Accounting for previous studies and factors discussed in this section, the paper builds on the works of Reif and Schmitt (1980) concerning the “second-order” theory, and of Lijphart (1997) concerning political representation. We investigate turnout determinants at National and European elections and test the “second-order” theory. We start by analyzing individual voting behavior across “first-order” National elections and “second-order” European elections. Given that for the European Parliament elections turnout has always been lower with respect to National Parliament elections, our hypothesis is that it is more likely that voters' skewed participation exists only at European level. The aim is to test if Lijphart's hypothesis regarding unequal participation when turnout is low, holds.

Since European integration has provided “elites”¹⁷ with new opportunities to exploit their human capital, to live and work wherever they choose within the European Union and allowed them to have more flexibility to travel at lower costs, these categories may be more likely to go to vote in the European elections. If this is the case, we hypothesize that if people vote according to their socioeconomic category, political representation is skewed towards the category that votes more. Since politicians target policies to their public, this trend could further induce a political representation gap that would accentuate socio-economic inequalities in EU, creating socio-political instability¹⁸.

To this purpose, we estimate the probability of voting in the European and National elections using data from the 4th wave of the European Social Survey (ESS, 2008) for National parliamentary elections, and from the Standard Eurobarometer Survey (EB 71.1, 2009) for European parliamentary elections, respectively. We restrict the samples to common individual-level data, in order to compare the effect of socioeconomic categories on turnout rate across elections. Electoral participation estimation is further performed re-specifying the models and using the enhanced data sets. The individual-level estimations are complemented by testing the “second-order” theory at aggregate level, looking at how governing parties do across elections in terms of vote share differential. We test¹⁹ whether or not inequality in electoral participation

¹⁷ Simon Hix, *What's Wrong with the European Union and How to Fix It*, Polity Press, Cambridge, England, 2008.

¹⁸ Alberto Alesina, Roberto Perotti, “Income Distribution, Political Instability, and Investment”, *European Economic Review*, vol. 40, issue 6, 1996, pp. 1203-1228.

¹⁹ To this purpose an original data set is built concerning the parties vote shares obtained in European and National elections. We investigate the difference across the two, accounting for party characteristics, politicians and country characteristics as well as macroeconomic conditions.

induces inequality in political representation as well and investigate what determines turnout gap in vote shares obtained by parties across elections.

Concerning the enhanced estimations, national electoral participation is estimated as a function of individual characteristics (e.g. age, gender, occupation, education, nationality), government satisfaction and trust in national Parliament. European electoral participation is estimated as a function of individual demographic and socioeconomic characteristics (e.g. age, gender, occupation, education, nationality, political orientation), MEPs vote criteria (e.g. notoriety, national and European experience, etc.) and political information (e.g. knowledge about the EP, MEPs, political discussions on EU).

However, political information may be an endogenous explanatory covariate when explaining turnout²⁰ since unobservable variables may determine both support for the European Union and the desire to acquire political knowledge²¹. Different approaches are used in order to identify the causal effect of political knowledge on policy allocation level. In the literature, exogenous information sources citizens are exposed to, as well as politicians reputation are used as instruments in order to isolate the causal effect of information on participation. Following these studies, by introducing a variable in our model that catch EU support (i.e. EU has a positive image, attachment and trust towards EU) should reduce the bias.

Trough elections, citizens could hold politicians and governments in fact, accountable. At the EP level, it would imply to actually promote or punish the MEPs, by re-electing them in office or not based on their activity and policies promoted, and so making the EP accountable²² to its electorate. Therefore, it is important to examine MEPs characteristics in the context of European elections²³. As such, we account for politicians' personal²⁴ characteristics such as honesty, integrity and competence, particularly when sanctions are limited. Empirical findings suggest that European elections may indeed represent a selection process, voters rewarding²⁵ good party politicians at EU level.

²⁰ Valentino Larcinese, "Does Political Knowledge Increase Turnout? Evidence from the 1997 British General Election", *Public Choice*, vol. 131, no. 3/4, 2007, pp. 387-411.

²¹ Floriana Cerniglia, Laura Pagani, "Does Political Knowledge Increase Support for Europe? A Cross Country Investigation of the Attitudes of European Citizens", *Cesifo Working Paper* No. 3369, 2011.

²² Andreas Follesdal, Simon Hix, "Why There is a Democratic Deficit in the EU: A Response to Majone and Moravcsik", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2006, pp. 533-562.

²³ Pippa Norris, Mark Franklin, "Social Representation", *European Journal of Political Research* no. 35, 1997, pp.185-210.

²⁴ Timothy Besley, Rohini Pande, Vijayendra Rao, "Selection and the Quality of Government: Evidence from South India", Yale University, *Economic Growth Centre Discussion Paper* 21, 2005.

²⁵ Sara Hobolt, Bjorn Hoyland, "Political Selection and Electoral Competition in Second Order Elections", 2008, earlier version presented at the EUSA conference in May 2007.

The EP elections can be also modeled as a Principal (i.e. voters) – Agent (i.e. MEPs) and when information on agent's actions cannot be perceived, politicians experience might be an important determinant²⁶ in the selection process. Empirical evidence suggests that politicians experience is important in the European elections in terms of party vote share, as voters reward parties whom present experienced candidates to run for political office. Therefore, elections represent the selection mechanisms of naming politicians in office.

It is important to mention in this context that European electoral system is quite peculiar since it is based on national parties, but its outcome is not the formation of a government, while the electoral systems differ across Member States. As such, the performance of European politicians is less visible to the electorate and more difficult to be assessed and be held accountable. Since electoral rules are important, directly electing the MEPs, rather than choosing from a party ranked list, might increase legitimacy of the European Parliament and might incentivize the EU citizenry to participate to the European elections. Changing²⁷ the electoral rules might bring the EU and therefore the EP closer to its citizens, making the process more democratic.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

The data used in this paper refers to the Eurobarometer Survey (EB 71.1) concerning the 2009 European Elections and the European Social Survey (ESS, 4th wave) concerning last National elections, conducted on behalf of the European Commission. In addition, an unique data set concerning party vote shares obtained across elections is used²⁸.

The Eurobarometer Survey encloses data²⁹ that capture the electoral behavior in of EU 27 Member States³⁰ citizenry in the 2009 European

²⁶ Timothy Besley, "Political Selection", *Journal of Economic Perspectives in Politics*, vol. 3, no. 19, 2005, pp. 43-60.

²⁷ Simon Hix, Sara Hagemann, "Could Changing the Electoral Rules Fix European Parliament Elections?", *Politique européenne* vol. 2, no. 28, 2009, pp. 37-52.

²⁸ It refers to the 2004, 2009 EP elections and previous national parliament elections.

²⁹ The sample size is usually of 1000 respondents per country (face-to-face interviews), with some exceptions (e.g. Luxembourg-300; Malta-500; Cyprus-500; Iceland-600; Germany-2000, 150; United Kingdom-1300). Given the heterogeneity of nations in terms of population size, weighting is used in order to adjust the sample size to each nation universe.

³⁰ In the Eurobarometer 71.1 there were interviewed 30.232 citizens in the 27 countries of the European Union after the 2004/2007 enlargement (i.e. including the Accession Countries Romania and Bulgaria), in the remaining Candidate Countries (CC) Croatia and Turkey, as well as among the Turkish Cypriote Community (TCC) and in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). All respondents were residents in the respective country, nationals and non-nationals but EU-citizens, and aged 15 and over.

Parliament elections. More specifically, the survey contains a wide range of information concerning individual characteristics such as age, gender, education, civil status and labor market status. The data captures subjective knowledge about the EP elections (e.g. knowledge about the European Parliament, knowledge on MEP election procedure), political attitudes and electoral intentions. The main question of interest is:

“Can you tell me on a scale of 1 to 10 how likely it is that you would vote in the next European elections in June 2009? Please place yourself at a point on this scale where ‘1’ indicates that you would ‘definitely not vote’, ‘10’ indicates that you would ‘definitely vote’ and the remaining numbers indicates something in between these two positions?”

We consider as dependent variable individuals placing themselves strictly above 5 on the scale indicating the likelihood of voting³¹. Given that the survey was conducted before actual elections took place, we must rely on the reported vote probability³².

The European Social Survey encloses data concerning national elections for 17 EU Member States as well as non-EU countries; we restrict the ESS sample³³ only to the EU members in which the survey was conducted. Besides data on demographics, ESS encloses interesting data concerning national democracy and government satisfaction. The main question of interest is: “Did you vote in the last [country] national election in [month/year]? Yes/No/Not eligible”. As dependent³⁴ variable, we consider individuals answering yes.

The last data³⁵ set used, is an unbalanced panel data enclosing 238 observations for 24 Member States³⁶ and originates mainly from The Parliament and Government Composition Database (European University Institute, 2010) and IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance)

³¹ In the Eurobarometer Survey, vote probability over/under-reporting might emerge due to the fact that the survey was conducted before the actual election took place. In order to check robustness, an alternative threshold (individuals placing themselves strictly above 7 on the vote likelihood scale) has been used, that held similar results, not reported here. Furthermore, ordered regressions have been used, reported in the empirical results section.

³² Voting intentions and real turnout are positively correlated.

³³ EU Member States not included in the European Social Survey are: Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Republic of Cyprus, Malta, and Slovakia. For these countries empirical analysis is not conducted at National elections level, but only at European elections when we re-specify the models.

³⁴ In the European Social Survey, vote probability over-reporting might emerge since citizens that voted might tend to participate more in surveys, they may also say they voted even if they didn't.

³⁵ In the following Section 3.4, the Estimation Strategy is given, explaining these variables role.

³⁶ EU Member States not included in the sample are Luxembourg, Malta and Republic of Cyprus. Furthermore, given limited observation number, data is not further restricted to 17 Members common to all surveys.

concerning party vote shares in the European Parliament elections (i.e. 2004, 2009) as well as party vote shares in previous national elections and turnout. Our dependent variable is given by the vote share differential across elections.

The data set includes party characteristics as well (i.e. country, left to right political ideology, number of seats obtained-party size, election date). Party political ideology is an indicator ranging from 1-left to 10-right. In the empirical analysis dummy variables have been used in order to group political ideology from extreme left to extreme right. In addition, we account for each party's left-right position distance with respect to the center of the scale as a measure of political extremism. We complement these data by adding European Parliament Members (MEP) characteristics (e.g. attendance rate, loyalty to political group, loyalty to country majority) which have been extracted from Vote Watch³⁷. Party politicians characteristics are continuous variables and refer to plenary sessions attendance (registered or voted), how often an MEP voted along the majority line as MEPs from the same political group (loyalty to political group) and how often an MEP voted along the lines of the same country MEPs majority (e.g. loyalty to country majority). We include these variables in order to determine the role MEPs quality play in the vote shares a party gets, having in mind that a high-quality MEP would bring more votes in the EP elections.

Macroeconomic indicators are also accounted for. GDP per capita (Eurostat) accounts for country's economic activity and approximates living standards, in understand the electoral gap. We add country characteristics such as net payer/receiver to the EU budget which have been extracted from the European Commission Financial Report (2009). Net payer/receiver³⁸ is an indicator that shows a country financial loss or gain from being an EU member, for the period under analysis. Being a net payer actually means more losses from contributing than receiving from the EU budget and could be a possible explanation of low electoral participation in the EP elections. However, net payer/receiver refers strictly to accounting and does not cover any other benefit from EU membership in terms of policies.

European Monetary Union (EMU) membership is taken into consideration as well since it involves stricter economic conditions to be met, differentiating across countries. EMU variable indicates if an EU Member State

³⁷ Vote Watch is a non-profit organization which aims at increasing EU transparency, by providing information on the European Parliament and Council of Ministers decision-making procedures.

³⁸ Based on European Commission 2009 Financial Report- "Operating budgetary balances' are calculated, for a given Member State, as the difference between allocated operating expenditure (i.e. excluding administration) and own resources payments (excluding traditional own resources)". A positive operating budgetary balance indicates a net receiver while a negative operating budgetary budget indicates a net contributor Member State.

is part of the euro zone, or not. In fact, EMU countries may blame the EU for the worsening of living standards, which could translate into an increased gap across elections.

Government variable, refers to whether or not a given party was forming the government at the time of the European Parliament elections. By controlling for this, we actually want to see if the European elections are used as a protest against the current government or not. If government parties lose votes in the European Parliament elections, which timing does not generally coincide with national elections, this would mean that the former elections are used to trigger an alarm signal against the governing parties.

Electoral system difference is a dummy variable indicating whether or not the electoral rules differ across national and European elections. We account for electoral systems differences in terms of electoral formula and ballot structure in order to understand if voters might be confused concerning electoral procedures across elections which would induce a decreased electoral participation.

To have a better understanding of the electoral system across election types, Table 1³⁹ presents the types of electoral systems⁴⁰ in place for each election type and European Union Member State. For the EP elections, in practice 25 Member States use the List - PR system, while Malta and the Republic of Ireland use the Single Transferable Vote.

In nine Member States the voters cannot alter the order in which candidates appear on a list (closed list). In fourteen Members, casting preferential votes may change the order of names on the list (semi-open list). In Ireland Malta and Northern Ireland the lists are open; the electors vote for individual candidates, every voter listing the candidates in order of preference (single transferable vote). In Luxembourg voters may cross-vote, meaning they vote for candidates from different lists and have as many votes as there are mandates to allocate. In Sweden voters may also add or delete names from the list.

³⁹ The electoral system comparison is given for all EU Member States for completeness reasons. However, Luxembourg, Malta and Republic of Cyprus are not included in the dataset enclosing electoral system differences.

⁴⁰ A more detailed description of the electoral systems can be found in Electoral Systems in Europe: An Overview, – An ECPRD publication on topical parliamentary affairs, 2000.

Table 1
Electoral Systems

Country	European Parliament	National Parliament
Austria	PR with preferential vote 4 % threshold	PR with preferential vote 4 % threshold
Belgium	PR with preferential vote	PR with preferential vote
Bulgaria	PR	PR with preferential vote 4 % threshold
Cyprus	PR with preferential vote 1,8 % threshold	PR with preferential vote
Czech Republic	PR with preferential vote 5 % threshold	PR with preferential vote
Denmark	PR with preferential vote	PR with preferential vote
Estonia	PR with closed lists	PR
Finland	PR with preferential vote	PR with preferential vote
France	PR with closed lists 5 % threshold	Second Ballot Majority Runoff
Germany	PR with closed lists 5 % threshold	Mixed Proportional system
Greece	PR with closed lists 3 % threshold	PR with preferential vote
Hungary	PR with closed lists 5% threshold	Mixed Member Proportional system
Ireland	PR with STV	STV
Italy	PR with preferential vote 4 % threshold	Additional member system
Latvia	PR with preferential vote 5% threshold	PR with preferential vote
Lithuania	PR with preferential vote 5% threshold	Additional Member system
Luxembourg	PR with preferential vote	PR with vote-splitting
Malta	PR with STV	STV
Netherlands	PR with preferential vote	PR with closed lists
Poland	PR with closed lists 5% threshold	PR with closed lists 5-8% threshold
Portugal	PR with closed lists	PR with closed lists
Romania	PR with preferential vote 5% threshold	PR with closed lists 3% threshold
Slovakia	PR with preferential vote 5% threshold	PR with closed lists
Slovenia	PR with preferential vote 4 % threshold	PR with Preferential vote
Spain	PR with closed lists	Additional Member system
Sweden	PR with preferential vote 4% threshold	PR with closed lists
United Kingdom	PR with closed lists (Northern Ireland PR with STV)	Simple Majority Vote

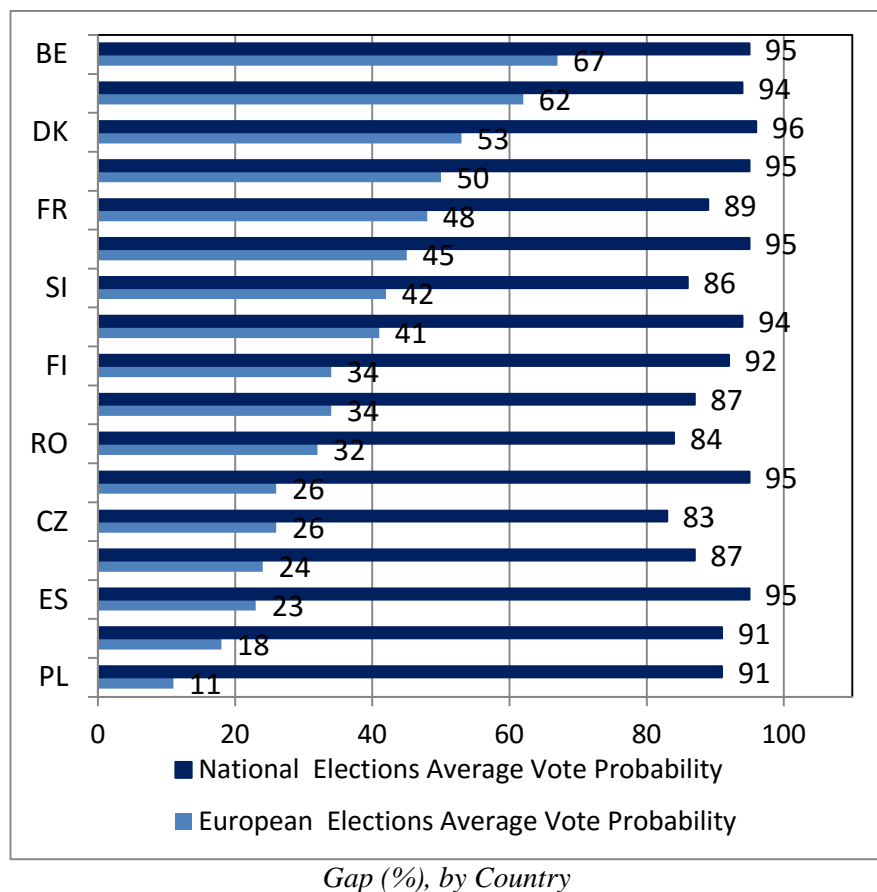
PR - Proportional representation; STV - Single Transferable Vote

To start with, empirical analysis will be conducted restricting the sample to common EU Members initially. In order to exploit the EB survey, estimations will be conducted using enhanced data in a later stage. Figure 1 presents a clear view on individuals' probability⁴¹ of voting, comparing the probability of voting for (2009) European and previous National elections.

⁴¹ Citizens of Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Republic of Cyprus, Malta, and Slovakia have not be interviewed in the European Social Survey.

We observe that both using individual-level data and real turnout, the gap in participation exists still across elections. Differences in self-declared intention/reported vote exists due to the fact that individuals tend to over-report voting, and individuals declaring that they intend to vote/voted tend to take part more in surveys with respect to others as well as by the fact that self-reported votes are not always valid. The electoral register, where applicable as the basis for computing turnout, may not be completely accurate since may be compiled in advance of the elections day and not all individuals that subscribed actually participate.

Figure 1
National and European Elections Participation Rate,

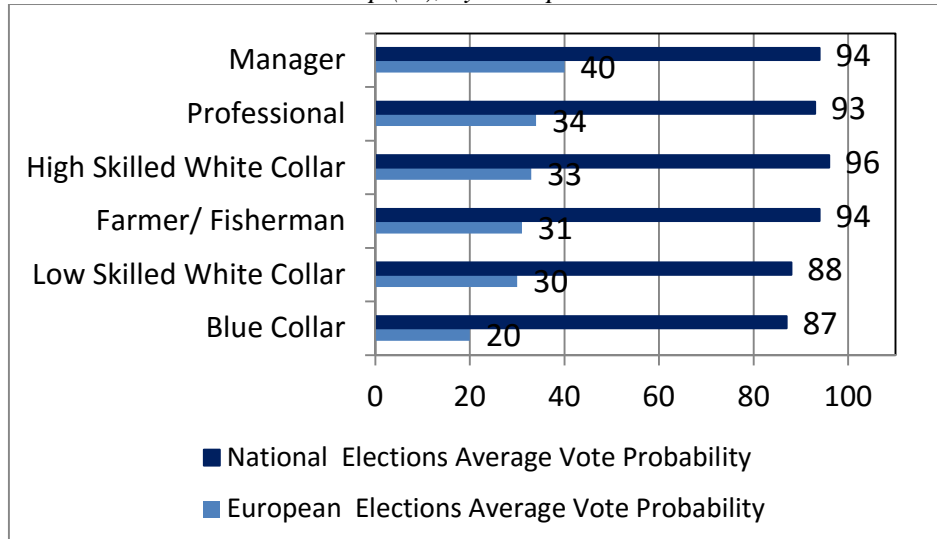


Weighted statistics in order to account for the sample size in report to country universe, are given for individuals whom vote in both the National and European elections. Real turnout is given in Appendix, Figure 1.1.

To start with, the participation rate is always higher in national elections with respect to the European ones. The country with the higher electoral participation rate is Belgium, while the lowest national rates are registered in Czech Republic for national election rates and in Poland for the EP election rates.

In terms of occupation, the electoral participation rate is given in Figure 2. Once again we observe that national participation rates overcome the European ones, for each occupational category. It can be noticed that at European level, there exists a discrepancy across voting probability as top-down (e.g. Professional, Manager, High-skilled White Collar, etc.) are more likely to vote with respect to bottom-up occupational categories (e.g. Low-skilled White Collars, Farmers and Fishermen, Blue Collars). The highest gap between National/European electoral participation rates is at the bottom of the occupational categories: Blue Collars, Farmers and Fishermen. It is here where more voting incentives should be placed.

Figure 2
National and European Elections Participation Rate
Gap (%), by Occupation



An enhanced attention will be given to the European Elections voting criteria. Table 2 offers some preliminary suggestions on how do people decide whom to vote for by showing the joint probability of voting (i.e. yes/no) and voting criteria.

Table 2
Vote Probability Distribution over Vote Criteria (EU 27), EP Elections

<i>Vote Criteria</i>	<i>Vote Probability (%)</i>		
	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Total</i>
European Elections vote: Candidate Personality	31.31	68.69	100
European Elections vote: Candidate National Politics Position	33.12	66.88	100
European Elections vote: Candidate European Politics Position	25.70	74.30	100
European Elections vote: Candidate Party EU Politics Position	22.97	77.03	100
European Elections vote: Candidate Notoriety	39.70	60.30	100
European Elections vote: Candidate Experience in EU Politics	29.58	70.42	100
European Elections vote: Candidate Experience in National Politics	33.06	66.94	100
European Elections vote: None	85.80	14.20	100
European Elections vote: Other Motivation	28.27	71.73	100
European Elections vote: Do not Know Motivation	66.53	33.47	100
Total	36.92	63.08	100

Choosing only one possible vote criteria, for 77% of individuals that would go to vote, the main element in their decision would be the position on European politics of candidate's party. Also an important criterion is the position of the MEP on European Politics since 74% of individuals going to vote, would consider this as main element when casting their vote.

Candidate's experience in national politics matter, as 70% of citizens that vote considers this as main vote criteria, as well as his/ hers experience and position on the national political scene (main voting criteria for 66% of individuals that would vote). Subjective aspects are also important, such as candidate's personality which is the main voting criteria for 68% of individuals that would vote and notoriety which is the main voting criteria for 60% of individuals that would vote. For 71% of individuals that expressed their intention to vote, there are however other possible motivations to consider. Furthermore, 68% of survey respondents that intend to go to vote believe that MEPs sit in the European Parliament according to party political affinities, highlighted in Table 3⁴².

⁴² Appendix, Table 3. Vote probability distribution over MEP characteristics (EU 27), EP Elections.

Table 3
Vote Probability Distribution over MEP Characteristics (EU 27)
EP Elections

<i>European Parliament Members Affiliation</i>	<i>Vote Probability (%)</i>		
	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Total</i>
Nationality	34.58	65.42	100
Political affinities	31.03	68.97	100
Do not know	48.75	51.25	100
Total	36.92	63.08	100

In the ESS sample, the majority of respondents went to vote in the national elections (92.15%). In the sample there are more men than women and most of respondents have a center political ideology, upper secondary level of education and are quite interested in politics. 57% of respondents are fairly satisfied with their life as a whole, 48% are rather satisfied with how democracy works in their country, but a majority of 41% of respondents are rather unsatisfied with their national government performance. In the National elections, the more satisfied citizens are with national democracy and national government, the higher the probability of voting. This information is given in Table 4⁴³.

Table 4
Vote Probability, over Satisfaction with Democracy and Government (EU17)
National Elections

<i>How satisfied with the way democracy works in the country?</i>	<i>Vote probability (%)</i>		<i>How satisfied with the national government?</i>	<i>Vote probability (%)</i>		
<i>Scale</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Scale</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Total</i>
Not Very Satisfied	11.96	88.04	Not Very Satisfied	10.79	89.21	100
Rather Satisfied	9.78	90.22	Rather Satisfied	8.16	91.84	100
Rather Satisfied	5.90	94.10	Rather Satisfied	5.11	94.89	100
Very Satisfied	4.51	95.49	Very Satisfied	8.24	91.76	100
Total	7.61	92.39	Total	7.61	92.39	100

Figures 3-5 provide more insights concerning the aggregate level data. Figure 3 provides information that relates vote share gap by party political

⁴³ Appendix, Table 4. Vote probability over satisfaction with democracy and government (EU17), National Elections.

orientation. Center parties have the least gap in turnout across elections. Moving, from the center towards the extremes, the gap increases.

Figure 3
Parties Vote Share Gap by Political Orientation

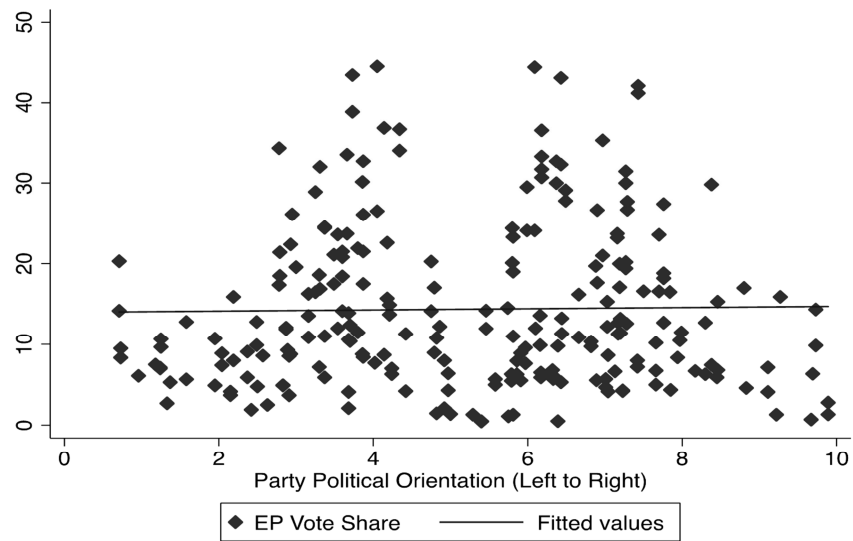


Figure 4
Parties Vote Share at European and National Level, by EMU

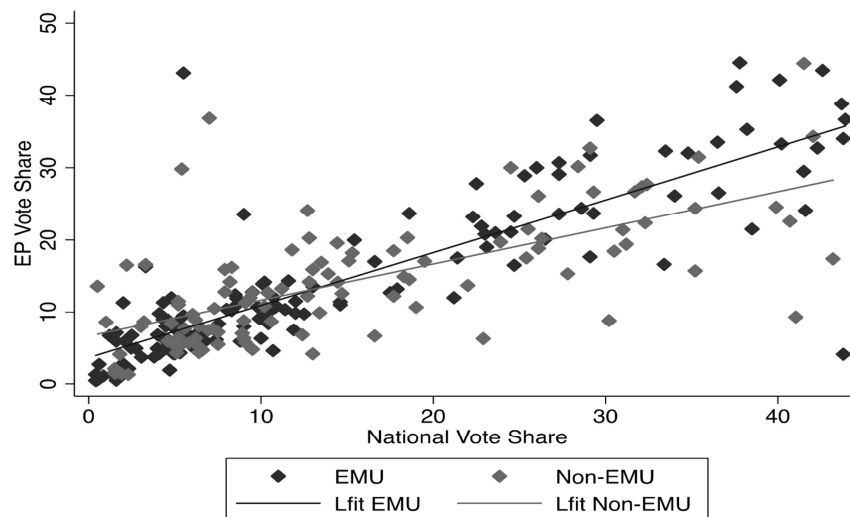
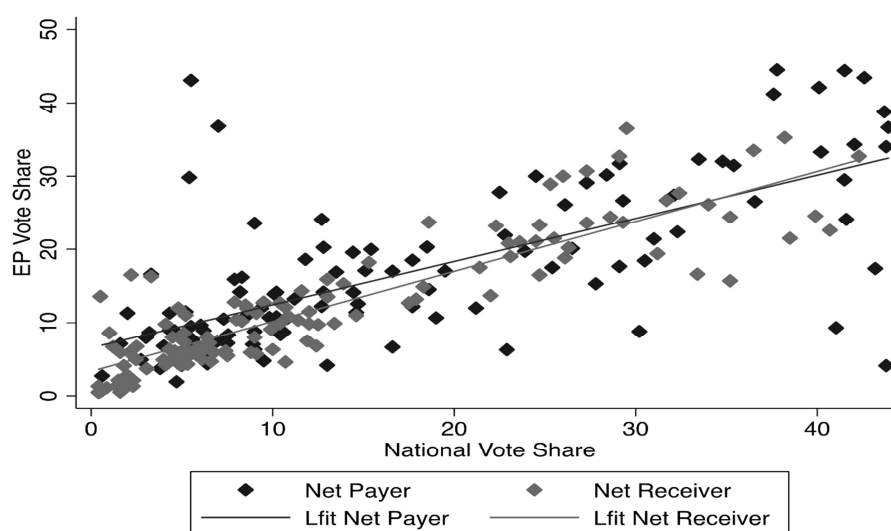


Figure 4, above, presents the bivariate relation between national and European turnout in terms of party vote share, across EMU countries. Comparing slopes of different groups, we observe a higher vote share gap across elections for EMU countries.

Figure 5, below, provides information on vote share gap, differentiating by being a net-contributor/net-receiver at the EU budget. We observe a positive relationship between the variables as they both have upward slopes. Parties within net-receivers countries have a smaller gap across elections with respect to net-payer countries, but the gap increases as national vote shares increases.

Figure 5
Parties Vote Share at European and National Level, by EU Budget Contribution



ESTIMATION STRATEGY

The probability of voting in the European and National elections, restricting⁴⁴ the samples to common individual-level data is estimated as a function of demographic and socio-economic variables (i.e. age, dummies for

⁴⁴ Exact survey questions for European elections are available at, <http://zacat.gesis.org/webview/>, respectively at <http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/data/round-index.html> for national elections.

gender, education, occupation, civic status), political orientation (i.e. dummies for extreme left-extreme right political views) and country effects (dummies for nationality). For the European elections, 2009 electoral participation is measured by vote intention (anticipated) while for the National elections, previous electoral participation is measured by reported turnout (retroactive). The time span between elections is minimum⁴⁵.

In order to allow comparison between European and National elections vote probability, we shape both dependent variables as dichotomous: taking value 1 if voted and 0 if not. To start with, we confront voting behavior across elections and restrict the data to common set of controls. The main question we address is: do socioeconomic characteristics induce unequal electoral participation? We apply Logit model to estimate the effect of occupational categories on voting probability. The formal estimated regression is given by:

$$V_{ix} = D'_{ix}\alpha + P'_{ix}\beta + O'_{ix}\gamma + C'_{ix}\lambda + \varepsilon_{ix}, \text{ where}$$

(1)

The probability of voting for citizen i in election x , V_{ix} is given by:

$$V_{ix} = 1 \text{ if participates to vote}$$

$$V_{ix} = 0 \text{ if does not participates to vote}$$

$$x \in \{e, n\}, \text{ where:}$$

e -European elections, n -National elections. D'_{ix} represents a vector of demographic characteristics such as age and dummy variables regarding, gender, civil status and education (i.e. age when finished education); P'_{ix} represents a vector of political orientation (i.e. dummies for extreme left to extreme right), O'_{ix} represent a vector of occupational categories (i.e. dummies for being a Professional, Manager, High/Low Skilled White Collar, Blue Collar, Farmer and Fishermen), its coefficient γ being our main variable of interest; C'_{ix} represents a vector of country dummies (17 EU members); ε_{ix} is the error term which is assumed to have a standard logistic distribution.

After confronting voting behavior using the same variables for European and National elections, estimations are further performed using the enhanced data sets, accounting for supplementary information. For the 2009 EP elections, when estimating turnout, additional covariates that can be used refer to MEPs vote criteria (e.g. notoriety, national and European experience, etc.) and citizens information concerning the elections and the European Parliament, to start with. The formal estimated regression⁴⁶ is given by:

⁴⁵ The survey question refers to last national election and the date of survey is 2008. Previous national elections range between 2004-2008 depending on the country, not mentioned in the ESS questionnaire.

⁴⁶ Equation (2) is estimated firstly by using Logit. Taking advantage of the dependent variable ordered structure as well as to account for the differences between voting

European Elections:

$$V_{ie} = D'_{ie}\alpha + P'_{ie}\beta + O'_{ie}\gamma + B'_{ie}\delta + I'_{ie}\eta + C'_{ie}\lambda + \varepsilon_{ie},$$

where (2)

The probability of vote of citizen i in European Parliament elections⁴⁷, V_{ie} :

$V_{ie}=1$ if participates to vote

$V_{ie}=0$ if does not participates to vote, where:

P'_{ie} is a vector which encloses now dummy variables regarding political orientation (i.e. extreme left-extreme right) and political debates frequency. Additional controls are denoted by B'_{ie} which is a vector of vote criteria (benchmark for voting i.e. dummies for candidate personality, experience, notoriety) and I'_{ie} which is a vector referring to information variables (i.e. dummies for knowledge about the European Parliament, MEP election, mass-media information sources). ε_{ie} is the error term, which is assumed to have a standard logistic distribution.

Political information however, given that refers to knowledge about the European Parliament, its members and political discussion on European topics, may be endogenous as being in favor of the European Union and its institutions may induce citizens to gather more information, debate and to participate to European elections. But if support for the European Union itself drives citizens to get more information on the EU institutions, and to participate more in the elections, we need to capture the “Europeanism” degree⁴⁸ and to account for EU-support effects in the empirical analysis since it may influence both the willingness to acquire information and to participate in the European Parliament Elections. As such, we include in the regression a covariate that refers to trust in the European Parliament. Since trust⁴⁹ is a key element for building a common political identity, and support for the European Union, this variable should control for unobservable EU support, likely to simultaneously determine turnout and information acquisition.

Citizens ideological left-right political ideology self-placement enclosed in the model should capture as well some of the unobserved heterogeneity that drives both turnout and political knowledge. Mass-media information sources is enclosed among covariates in order to capture the impact of mass media on turnout, together with covariates related to EMU membership and occupational categories interaction terms with EMU membership in order to better capture

probability and real turnout, we apply ordered models as well. Findings support initial findings; not reported.

⁴⁷ EU 27.

⁴⁸ Floriana Cerniglia, Laura Pagani, “Does Political Knowledge Increase Support for Europe? A Cross Country Investigation of the Attitudes of European Citizens”, *Cesifo Working Paper* No. 3369, 2011.

⁴⁹ Claus Offe, “How Can we Trust our Fellow Citizens?”, in Mark E. Warren (ed.), *Democracy and Trust*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 42-87.

the effect of socioeconomic categories in terms of electoral participation at European level, in EMU Member States.

When estimating (last) national elections participation, additional covariates refer to life, democracy and government satisfaction as well as trust in national parliament, politicians and parties. Now, the formal estimated regressions are given by:

National Elections:

$$V_{in} = D'_{in}\alpha + P'_{in}\beta + O'_{in}\gamma + S'_{ie}\theta + T'_{ie}\mu + C'_{in}\lambda + \varepsilon_{in} \quad (3)$$

The probability of vote of citizen i in National Parliament elections⁵⁰, V_{in} :

$V_{in}=1$ if participates to vote

$V_{in}=0$ if does not participates to vote, where:

P'_{in} is a vector which encloses now dummy variables regarding political orientation (i.e. extreme left-extreme right) and political interest. Additional controls are denoted by S'_{in} which is a vector enclosing satisfaction indicators (i.e. dummies for life satisfaction, government satisfaction, democracy satisfaction) and T'_{in} is a vector of variables which refers to trust (i.e. dummies for trust in parties, politicians and Parliament). ε_{in} is the error term which is assumed to have a standard logistic distribution.

As a counterpart for individual level estimations, we use aggregate panel data in order to identify whether and how the turnout gap is reflected in terms of party vote shares. We analyze how the differences in vote shares obtained by the same party across elections can be explained as well as if “second order” theory features hold. Despite lower turnout of the European elections, smaller parties should obtain a higher vote share, while government parties should lose votes, since voters will vote strategically against government parties in order to express discontent regarding office performance (Reif, Schmidt, 1980). The formal regression is given by:

Eurogap:

$$V_{pj} = P'_{pj}\alpha + C'_{pj}\beta + M'_{pj}\rho + E'_{pj}\xi + \varepsilon_{pj} \quad (4)$$

where p =party, $p \in \{1, 2, \dots, z\}$; j =country, $j \in \{1, 2, \dots, 24\}$

V_{pj} is a continuous dependent variable, given by party vote share differential across European and National elections. P_{pj} is a vector of variables referring to party characteristics in terms of political ideology (i.e. dummies for extreme left to extreme right), a dummy for being in government at the time of the European elections, distance from the center and size (i.e. number of parliamentarians),

⁵⁰ EU 17, non-historical order.

which are continuous variables. C'_{pj} is a vector of politician's characteristics (attendance rate, loyalty to country majority and loyalty to political group) which are continuous variables. M'_{pj} is a vector of variables enclosing information on GDP per Capita (continuous variable), and dummies referring to EMU membership and being a net-payer or a net-contributor at the European Union budget. E'_{pj} is a vector enclosing dummy variables indicating whether or not differences in electoral systems exists and the election year. ε_{pj} is the error term.

Since estimating equation (4) with OLS is somewhat problematic because our data is not independent, having an hierarchical structure as the data refers to different groups of parties, nested within countries. Therefore, we account for that by using OLS with clustered robust standard errors analysis in a first stage, and by using a multilevel⁵¹ model in a later stage.

EMPIRICAL RESULTS: EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

Empirical analysis is performed using data samples restricted to common Member States and variables. Table 5⁵² compares turnout determinants across elections.

Table 5
National vs. European Vote Probability Determinants, (EU17)

<i>Vote Probability</i>	<i>European Parliament Elections, 2009</i>		<i>Last National Election, 2008</i>	
Variables	Coef.	Std.Err.	Coef.	Std.Err.
Age	0.02	0.02	0.09*	0.03
Age Squared	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Female	-0.12	0.08	0.03	0.15
Left	0.52**	0.13	-0.05	0.24
Centre	0.16	0.11	-0.25	0.22

⁵¹ Not reported.

⁵² Marginal effects are given in Table 5.1. Appendix. Within group correlated error term may have induced inflated statistics and biased standard errors. Testing for intra-class correlation, the coefficient found was very small, of 0.01 and was accounted for by clustering by occupation. Since the standard errors decreased, this suggest that within clusters variation being very small, the model is better off without clustering. Therefore, only un-clustered robust standard errors are reported.

Right	0.40*	0.14	0.35	0.29
Extreme Right	0.76**	0.18	-0.28	0.39
Married	0.12	0.42	1.09**	0.32
Single	0.04	0.43	1.15*	0.38
Divorced	0.02	0.43	0.46	0.37
Finished education between 16-19	0.22	0.13	-0.11	0.17
Finished education over 20	0.59**	0.15	0.21	0.31
Professional	0.67**	0.18	-0.06	0.50
Manager	0.59*	0.25	-0.06	0.53
High Skilled W.C.	0.39*	0.14	0.71	0.59
Low Skilled W.C.	-0.08	0.13	-0.32	0.63
Blue Collar	-0.16	0.13	-0.75	0.50
Belgium	1.57**	0.21	0.28	0.46
Denmark	0.37	0.19	0.72	0.45
Deutschland	0.48*	0.17	-0.08	0.40
Greece	1.42**	0.20	0.51	0.51
Spain	0.28	0.18	0.55	0.51
France	0.39*	0.18	-0.74	0.42
Netherlands	0.28	0.20	0.20	0.45
United Kingdom	-0.85**	0.18	-0.98*	0.40
Finland	0.16	0.19	-0.30	0.40
Sweden	0.40*	0.18	0.35	0.42
Czech Republic	0.03	0.18	-1.17*	0.43
Hungary	-0.06	0.19	0.30	0.52
Latvia	0.17	0.17	-0.84	0.49
Poland	-0.45	0.18	-0.44	0.47
Slovenia	0.57*	0.18	-0.93*	0.43
Romania	0.83**	0.19	-0.67	0.45
Constant	-1.10	0.62	-1.02	1.03
Observation number,	6369	9%	6114	11.24%
Pseudo R ²				

Note: * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%.

We observe two main discrepancies between determinants of vote probability. Firstly, occupational categories have a significant effect on vote probability only for European election and not for National elections: individuals placed on a higher scale (e.g. Professional, Manager, High-skilled

White Collars) have a positive effect on participation probability at European level. On the one hand, this confirms that for the European elections only the more advantaged layers of occupational categories are more likely to go to vote. Therefore socioeconomic class matter when deciding to vote for the EP elections. We find on average, for European elections, that socioeconomic discrepancies exist, consistent with Lijphart's findings. Marginal effects⁵³ suggest that in European elections, under ceteris paribus, being a Professional increases the probability of voting by 15%, being a Manager by 13% and a High Skilled White Collar, by 9%, these results being statistically significant.

Political orientation matters as well in the European elections, left, right and extreme right political ideology having a positively and statistically significant effect on voting probability. At national level, neither occupational categories nor political orientation have significant explanatory power.

Country⁵⁴ effects are relevant in explaining electoral participation. We observe at national level that statistically significant country effects are negative: UK, Czech Republic and Slovenia, have a negative statistically significant effect on voting probability. At European level, statistically significant country effects are twofold: being an United Kingdom citizen has a negative impact on European elections vote probability, while being a citizens of either Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, France, Sweden, Slovenia and Romania, has a positive effect on voting probability in European Parliament elections. But country effects may be driven by external events that happen before the elections, such as for example short-term political scandals, especially for individuals with a low vote intention. Still, voters that have a high vote intention are less likely to be influenced by external factors and even political campaigns⁵⁵.

Across elections, French and Slovenian citizens have a switching attitude, positive in European elections but negative in National ones. This could be interpreted as a potential disagreement with the national government manifested through electoral participation rate: citizens vote less in national elections but more in European elections. Different incentives may be driving European citizenry to vote across elections.

In what follows, we re-estimate the initial model, using the enhanced data set. Results are presented in Table 6⁵⁶, applying the Logit⁵⁷ model.

⁵³ Table 5.1, presents marginal effects, given in Appendix.

⁵⁴ Estimations have been run as well, excluding Belgium and Luxembourg in order to account for compulsory voting, not reported. Estimates are consistent with the unrestrained model.

⁵⁵ Sunshine Hillygus, "Campaign Effects and the Dynamics of Turnout Intention in Election 2000", *Journal of Politics*, vol. 67, issue 1, 2005, pp. 50-68.

⁵⁶ Appendix, Table 6.1 presents complete estimation results and marginal effects.

⁵⁷ Ordered models support the empirical results when applying Logit. Not reported.

Professionals and higher educated individuals are more likely to participate to European Parliament elections, being positively and statistically significant. EP trust as well as knowledge about MEPs election have a positive effect on electoral participation. Different voting criteria concerning candidates' characteristics have a positive and statistically significant effect. When making decisions on voting, citizens take into consideration the candidate personality, notoriety, experience and position in both National and European political scene, as well as the candidate and its party position on EU politics. Therefore, even accounting for additional factors, politicians characteristics remain essential for explaining political participation decision. Discussing politics has a positive and statistical significant impact on the voting probability.

Table 6
EP Vote Probability Extended Model (EU 27, robust Std. Err.)

<i>Vote Probability</i>		<i>Extended Model</i>		
<i>Marginal Effects</i>				
Variables	Coef.	Std. Err. Coef.		Std. Err.
Stopped education between 16-19 years old	0.06	0.07	0.01	0.01
Stopped education over 20 years old	0.21*	0.09	0.05*	0.02
Education: still studying	0.68*	0.27	0.14*	0.05
Professional	0.60*	0.31	0.12	0.05
Owner	0.13	0.32	0.03	0.07
Manager	-0.17	0.28	-0.04	0.07
High skilled White Collar	0.21	0.27	-0.04	0.07
Low skilled White Collar	-0.23	0.26	0.05	0.06
Blue Collar	0.06	0.26	-0.05	0.06
Supervisor	-0.23	0.50	0.01	0.06
Retired	0.15	0.25	-0.05	0.12
Unemployed	0.01	0.27	0.03	0.06
Housewife	0.12	0.29	0.03	0.06
MEPs Election Knowledge: Yes	0.46**	0.06	0.08**	0.01
MEPs Election Knowledge: Do not know	0.12	0.08	0.03	0.03
MEPs Affiliation: Nationality	-0.09	0.07	0.11**	0.02
MEPs Affiliation: Political affinities	0.07	0.07	0.03	0.02
European Elections vote: Candidate Personality	1.48**	0.10	-0.02	0.02
European Elections vote: Candidate National Politics Position	1.52**	0.10	0.02	0.02
European Elections vote: Candidate European Politics Position	1.65**	0.11	0.26**	0.01
European Elections vote: Candidate Party EU Politics Position	1.77**	0.11	0.27**	0.01
European Elections vote: Candidate	1.06**	0.12	0.28**	0.01

Notoriety				
European Elections vote: Candidate	1.61**	0.10	0.30**	0.01
Experience in EU Politics				
European Elections vote: Candidate	1.59**	0.10	0.20**	0.02
Experience in National Politics				
European Elections vote: Other Motivation	1.73**	0.40	0.28**	0.01
Discuss politics (European): frequently	0.65**	0.10	0.27**	0.01
Discuss politics (European): occasionally	0.30**	0.06	0.26**	0.03
Discuss politics (European): do not know	0.75*	0.30	0.13**	0.02
Trust European Parliament	0.61**	0.05	0.07**	0.01
Professional (EMU)	-0.17	0.32	0.13*	0.05
Owner (EMU)	-0.13	0.29	0.14**	0.01
Manager (EMU)	0.40	0.23	-0.04	0.07
High skilled White Collar (EMU)	0.17	0.23	-0.03	0.07
Low skilled White Collar (EMU)	0.38	0.22	0.04	0.05
Blue Collar (EMU)	-0.18	0.21	0.08*	0.04
Supervisor (EMU)	0.16	0.57	-0.04	0.05
Retired (EMU)	0.02	0.18	0.03	0.12
Unemployed (EMU)	-0.06	0.24	0.01	0.04
Housewife (EMU)	0.12	0.29	-0.01	0.06
Newspaper	0.15	0.12	0.04	0.05
Magazine	-0.31	0.19	0.01	0.06
TV	-0.10	0.10	0.03	0.03
Radio	0.14	0.13	-0.07	0.05
Internet	0.19	0.12	-0.02	0.02
Other Media	-0.21	0.48	0.03	0.03
EMU Member Country	-0.03	0.20	0.04	0.03
Observations number, Pseudo R2	22886	19,28%	22886	19,28%

Note: * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%.

Furthermore, different information sources do not have a significant impact on turnout rate. Being a member of European Monetary Union, has a negative effect on electoral participation in EP elections, not significant. In terms of marginal effects, trusting the European Parliament increase the probability of participating to European elections by 14%. Political information covariates effects slightly decrease now, confirming the endogeneity of political information in determining turnout. Not controlling for this factor, leads to upward biased results.

Table 7⁵⁸ presents information concerning National elections. Using the enhanced dataset, occupational categories are still not statistical significant. It can be observed that being satisfied with life has a positive effect on political participation. Individuals may expect that their action of voting could be reflected in the government policies decision-making and policies pursued.

⁵⁸ Appendix, Table 7.1 presents full estimation results.

Table 7
National Vote Probability Determinants (EUI7, robust Std. Err.)

<i>Vote Probability</i>	<i>Extended Model</i>		<i>Marginal Effects</i>	
	Coef.	Std. Err.	Coef.	Std. Err.
Variables				
Primary education	-1.04	0.87	-0.08	0.09
Lower secondary education	-0.60	0.85	-0.02	0.04
Upper secondary education	-0.47	0.85	0.02	0.02
Post-secondary education	-0.12	0.91	-0.02	0.03
First tertiary education	-0.14	0.86	-0.02	0.03
Second tertiary education	1.48	1.20	-0.04	0.03
Low Skilled White Collar	-0.43	0.65	-0.02	0.04
High Skilled White Collar	0.57	0.61	0.02	0.02
Professional	-0.44	0.52	-0.02	0.03
Manager	-0.38	0.54	-0.02	0.03
Blue Collar	-0.71	0.51	-0.04	0.03
Trust National Parliament	0.32	0.21	0.01	0.01
Trust Politicians	0.13	0.30	0.01	0.01
Trust Party	0.04	0.31	0.00	0.02
Political interest very interested	0.88*	0.33	0.03*	0.01
Political interest quite interested	0.80*	0.28	0.03*	0.02
Political interest hardly interested	0.43	0.28	0.02	0.01
Life Satisfaction Not Very	-0.28	0.40	-0.02	0.02
Life Satisfaction Fairly	0.19	0.19	0.01	0.01
Life Satisfaction Very	0.45	0.25	0.02*	0.01
National Government Satisfaction Rather Bad	0.26	0.20	0.01	0.01
National Government Satisfaction Rather Good	0.25	0.26	0.01	0.01
National Government Satisfaction Very Good	-0.28	0.54	-0.02	0.03
National Democracy Satisfaction Rather Bad	0.04	0.23	0.00	0.01
National Democracy Satisfaction Rather Good	-0.04	0.27	0.00	0.01
National Democracy Satisfaction Very Good	0.05	0.38	0.00	0.02

Observation number,	6146	14%	6146	14%
Pseudo R2				

Note: * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%.

Indeed, voters preferences should be reflected in the different policies promoted by political parties. Trust in political parties, politicians and national parliament increase the probability of participating to National elections. However, it does not have any statistically significant impact on electoral participation decision. Regardless, trust determines in fact the legitimacy of parties to govern: trusting the political parties is a form of manifesting satisfaction with the policy outcomes that parties promote and implement.

Party Vote Share Gap

Table 8 presents turnout gap estimates in terms of party vote share.

Table 8
Party Vote Shares Gap across Elections

	Cluster OLS	
	Coef	Std.Err
Turnout Gap		
European Monetary Union	-1.40*	.77
Net Payer	-2.54**	.92
Electoral System Differences	.24	.68
Government	3.82	4.06
Left	1.65	1.69
Centre	.27	2.16
Right	3.47	2.13
Extreme Right	3.93	3.14
Centre Distance	.10	.67
Party Size	-.22*	.10
Party Size Squared	.00	.00
Attendance Rate Plenary	.02	.13
Loyalty to Country Majority	-.03**	.01
Loyalty to Political Group	-.07	.09
Log GDP per Capita	.37	1.54
Left Government	1.87	1.71
Right Government	.97	2.40
Centre Government	2.20	1.82
Extreme Right Government	-5.95	3.68
Year 2009	-.66	.52
Constant	7.02	15.85
Observation number, 237		

Note: * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%.

We find that being an EMU member deepens the gap across European and National vote shares. EMU countries have had to face more economic constraints in order to meet the accession criteria, while their citizens had to face the immigration of foreign and cheaper labor force into the national labor market. Therefore, for EMU Members, citizens be less supportive for the EU overall and may vote more in the National elections than in the European ones.

For parties within net payer countries the vote share decreases across elections. Being a net payer country could be a possible explanation of low electoral participation in the EP elections, as citizens of the concerned Member States may believe they contribute more to the EU than they actually get in return. However, EU should compensate budget contribution in terms of policies. Furthermore, we do not find significant evidence for European elections being used as a punishment against governing parties, nor that the difference in electoral systems across election confuse voters, determining them to vote less. Larger parties perform better in National elections and lose votes in EP elections in favor of smaller parties.

In terms of MEP characteristics, voting according to country majority, therefore being more nationalists, has a negative and statistically significant effect on vote share gap. Therefore one feature of the second-order election is confirmed, namely, that large parties lose votes in the European elections. However, voters do not seem to punish government parties by voting against them in the European elections, but rather cast their vote sincerely.

CONCLUSIONS

The study conducted provides new perspectives on electoral participation incentives at European and national level. This research work aimed at highlighting on the one hand, the increased importance of the European Parliament decision-making role and on the other, the decreased voters' turnout. In order to understand and correct this trend, our model allows firstly to compare turnout determinants between European and national elections using a restricted sample of Member States. Then, we performed individual estimations of electoral turnout determinants in order to take advantage of the richness of our samples concerning European and National elections and were able to confront individual electoral behavior with aggregate turnout data which refer to party vote share.

As main findings, differences in determinants of vote probability at national and European level exist. Socioeconomic criteria are relevant only for European Parliament elections, individuals placed on a higher socioeconomic scale having a positive and statistically significant effect on voting probability.

This confirms that at the European level there could exist indeed a representation gap induced by unequal electoral participation. However, other factors are accounted for when deciding to participate to supranational elections such as the candidate personality, notoriety, experience and position on both National and European political scene, as well as the candidate and party position on EU politics. Since European Parliament's performance is less visible and more difficult to be directly assessed by the Europeans, information related to politicians' quality might influence individuals when deciding to participate to elections or not. Therefore increasing political knowledge and politicians' quality might be a way for increasing turnout. However, mass media information sources do not seem to have a high role in explaining turnout.

For the "first-order" elections, turnout is generally higher. Life satisfaction and interest in politics increases significantly the probability of electoral participation. Moreover, country specific characteristics rather than socioeconomic categories explain better voters' participation at national polls.

Looking at aggregate data, we find that European elections are not used as a protest against the governing parties, which is in line with Koepke and Ringe (2006) and Weber (2007). This highlights the fact that European elections are seen as an opportunity to cast one's vote sincerely. We do however find evidence that large parties lose votes in European elections, the results corroborating with previous findings⁵⁹. EMU membership as well as being a net-payer country proves to deepen the gap across elections in terms of electoral participation.

Our results contribute to the previous literature in an innovative way by highlighting that there are different incentives which drive European citizenry to vote at National level with respect to European level. The results we have obtained support previous findings of Schmitt and van der Eijk (2001), as we do find socioeconomic categories to have a significant role in determining electoral participations. In addition to Besley, Pande and Rao (2005) which highlight the importance of politicians' selection, we find that citizens take into account politicians' characteristics when deciding to vote. It may be one of the main electoral participation incentives. All in all, we have proven that the most recent EP elections remain of "second-order" nature, despite the increased powers of the European Parliament after the Lisbon Treaty. However, more information on the European Union, European Parliament and making the supranational political scene more attractive, could increase electoral participation in order to reduce the risk of biased political representation, especially in the context of difficult macroeconomic conditions and decreased EU support of citizens from EMU and net-payer Member States.

⁵⁹ Federico Ferrara, Timo Weishaupt, "Get Your Act Together Party Performance in European Parliament Elections", *European Union Politics*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2004, pp. 283-306.

Appendix

Figure 1.1
*National and European Elections Turnout,
 Gap (%), by Country*

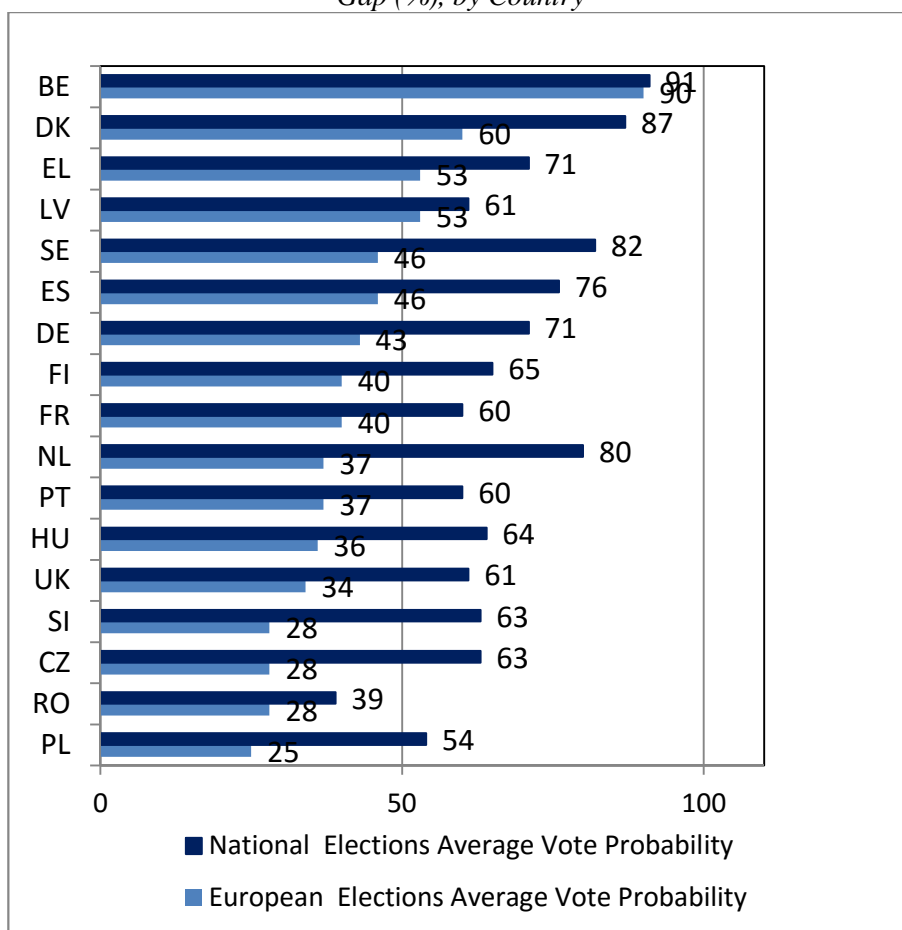


Table 5. 1
Marginal Effects National vs. European Vote Probability, (EU17)

<i>Vote Probability</i>	<i>European Parliament Elections, 2009</i>		<i>Last National Election, 2008</i>	
	Coef.	Std. Err.	Coef.	Std. Err.
Variables				
Age	0.00	0.01	0.00**	0.00
Age Squared	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Female	-0.03	0.02	0.00	0.01
Left	0.12**	0.03	0.00	0.01
Centre	0.04	0.03	-0.01	0.01
Right	0.09*	0.03	0.02	0.01
Extreme Right	0.16**	0.03	-0.02	0.03
Married	0.03	0.10	0.07*	0.03
Single	0.01	0.10	0.04**	0.01
Divorced	0.00	0.10	0.02	0.01
Finished education between 16-19	0.05	0.03	-0.01	0.01
Finished education over 20	0.14**	0.03	0.01	0.01
Professional	0.15**	0.04	0.00	0.03
Manager	0.13*	0.03	0.00	0.03
High Skilled W.C.	0.09*	0.03	0.03	0.02
Low Skilled W.C.	-0.02	0.03	-0.02	0.04
Blue Collar	-0.04	0.03	-0.05	0.04
Belgium	0.28**	0.02	0.01	0.02
Denmark	0.08	0.04	0.03*	0.01
Deutschland	0.11*	0.04	0.00	0.02
Greece	0.26**	0.03	0.02	0.02
Spain	0.07	0.04	0.02	0.02
France	0.09*	0.04	-0.05	0.03
Netherlands	0.07	0.04	0.01	0.02
United Kingdom	-0.21**	0.04	-0.07	0.04
Finland	0.04	0.04	-0.02	0.03
Sweden	0.11*	0.04	0.02	0.02
Czech Republic	0.00	0.04	0.00	0.04
Hungary	0.00	0.05	0.00	0.05
Latvia	0.03	0.04	0.03	0.04
Poland	-0.09	0.04	-0.09	0.04
Slovenia	0.13**	0.04	0.13**	0.04
Romania	0.17**	0.03	0.17**	0.03

Note: * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Ref. Variables: Extreme Left, Other Civil Status, Stopped education before/at 15 years old, Farmer and Fishermen, Portugal.

Table 6.1
EP Vote Probability Extended Model (EU 27, robust Std.Err.)

<i>Vote Probability</i>	<i>Extended Model</i>		<i>Marginal Effects</i>	
Variables	Coef.	Std. Err.	Coef.	Std. Err.
Age	0.03*	0.01	0.01*	0.00
Age squared	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Female	0.09	0.05	0.02	0.01
Political party: Left	-0.16	0.10	-0.04	0.02
Political party: Centre	-0.22*	0.09	-0.05*	0.02
Political party: Right	0.03	0.10	0.01	0.02
Political party: Extreme Right	0.17	0.12	0.04	0.03
Political party: Do not know	-0.46**	0.11	-0.11**	0.03
Married/ Living with partner	0.17*	0.07	0.04*	0.02
Single	0.17	0.10	0.04	0.02
Other civil status	-0.13	0.32	-0.03	0.07
Stopped education between 16-19 years old	0.06	0.07	0.01	0.02
Stopped education over 20 years old	0.21*	0.09	0.05*	0.02
Education: still studying	0.68*	0.27	0.14*	0.05
Professional	0.60*	0.31	0.12	0.05
Owner	0.13	0.32	0.03	0.07
Manager	-0.17	0.28	-0.04	0.07
High skilled White Collar	0.21	0.27	-0.04	0.07
Low skilled White Collar	-0.23	0.26	0.05	0.06
Blue Collar	0.06	0.26	-0.05	0.06
Supervisor	-0.23	0.50	0.01	0.06
Retired	0.15	0.25	-0.05	0.12
Unemployed	0.01	0.27	0.03	0.05
Housewife	0.12	0.29	0.03	0.06
European Parliament heard of: Yes	0.35**	0.06	0.08**	0.01
European Parliament heard of: Do not know	0.12	0.15	0.03	0.03
MEPs Election Knowledge: Yes	0.46**	0.06	0.11**	0.02
MEPs Election Knowledge: Do not know	0.12	0.08	0.03	0.02
MEPs Affiliation: Nationality	-0.09	0.07	-0.02	0.02
MEPs Affiliation: Political affinities	0.07	0.07	0.02	0.02
European Elections vote: Candidate Personality	1.48**	0.10	0.26**	0.01
European Elections vote: Candidate National Politics Position	1.52**	0.10	0.27**	0.01
European Elections vote: Candidate European Politics Position	1.65**	0.11	0.28**	0.01

European Elections vote: Candidate Party EU	1.77**	0.11	0.30**	0.01
Politics Position				
European Elections vote: Candidate Notoriety	1.06**	0.12	0.20**	0.02
European Elections vote: Candidate	1.61**	0.10	0.28**	0.01
Experience in EU Politics				
European Elections vote: Candidate	1.59**	0.10	0.27**	0.01
Experience in National Politics				
European Elections vote: Other Motivation	1.73**	0.40	0.26**	0.03
Discuss politics (European): frequently	0.65**	0.10	0.13**	0.02
Discuss politics (European): occasionally	0.30**	0.06	0.07**	0.01
Discuss politics (European): do not know	0.75*	0.30	0.13*	0.05
Trust European Parliament	0.61**	0.05	0.14**	0.01
Professional (EMU)	-0.17	0.32	-0.04	0.08
Owner (EMU)	-0.13	0.29	-0.03	0.07
Manager (EMU)	0.40	0.23	0.04	0.05
High skilled White Collar (EMU)	0.17	0.23	0.08	0.04
Low skilled White Collar (EMU)	0.38	0.22	-0.04	0.05
Blue Collar (EMU)	-0.18	0.21	0.03	0.12
Supervisor (EMU)	0.16	0.57	0.01	0.04
Retired (EMU)	0.02	0.18	-0.01	0.06
Unemployed (EMU)	-0.06	0.24	0.04	0.05
Housewife (EMU)	0.12	0.29	0.01	0.06
Newspaper	0.15	0.12	0.03	0.03
Magazine	-0.31	0.19	-0.07	0.05
TV	-0.10	0.10	-0.02	0.02
Radio	0.14	0.13	0.03	0.03
Internet	0.19	0.12	0.04	0.03
Other Media	-0.21	0.48	-0.05	0.12
EMU Member Country	-0.03	0.20	-0.01	0.05
Denmark	1.21**	0.15	0.03	0.03
Belgium	0.13	0.13	0.21**	0.02
Deutschland	0.26*	0.12	0.06*	0.03
Greece	0.94**	0.14	0.18**	0.02
Spain	-0.07	0.13	-0.02	0.03
France	0.35*	0.13	0.08*	0.03
Ireland	0.90**	0.14	0.17**	0.02
Italy	0.58**	0.14	0.12**	0.03
Luxembourg	0.37*	0.17	0.08*	0.03
Netherlands	0.06	0.14	0.01	0.03
United Kingdom	-0.60*	0.12	-0.14**	0.03
Finland	-0.25	0.13	-0.06	0.03
Austria	-0.43**	0.12	-0.10*	0.03
Sweden	0.04	0.13	0.01	0.03

Republic of Cyprus	0.50*	0.17	0.10*	0.03
Czech Republic	-0.32*	0.13	-0.07*	0.03
Estonia	-0.37*	0.13	-0.09*	0.03
Hungary	-0.35*	0.13	-0.08*	0.03
Latvia	-0.04	0.12	-0.01	0.03
Lithuania	0.00	0.07	0.16**	0.03
Malta	0.84**	0.21	-0.18**	0.03
Poland	-0.74**	0.12	-0.13**	0.03
Slovakia	-0.53**	0.13	0.00	0.03
Slovenia	0.00	0.13	0.01	0.03
Bulgaria	0.04	0.12	0.11**	0.02
Romania	0.51**	0.13	0.16**	0.03
Observations number, Pseudo R2	22886	19,28%	22886	19,28%

Note: * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Ref. Variables: Extreme Left, Divorced, Stopped education before/at 15 years old, Farmer and Fishermen, Farmer and Fishermen (EMU), European Parliament heard of: No, MEPs Election Knowledge: No, MEPs Affiliation: Do not know, European Election Vote Criteria: Do not know, Media source-none/do not know, Never discuss (European) politics, Portugal.

Table 7. 1
National Vote Probability Extended Model (EU17, robust Std. Err.)

<i>Vote Probability</i>	<i>Logit</i>		<i>Marginal Effects</i>	
Variables	Coef.	Std. Err.	Coef.	Std. Err.
Age	0.09*	0.03	0.00*	0.00
Age Squared	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Female	0.10	0.16	0.00	0.01
Left	-0.06	0.25	0.00	0.01
Centre	-0.26	0.23	-0.01	0.01
Right	0.28	0.29	0.01	0.01
Extreme Right	-0.20	0.39	-0.01	0.02
Married	1.06**	0.33	0.06*	0.02
Single	1.17**	0.38	0.04**	0.01
Divorced	0.50	0.38	0.02	0.01
Primary education	-1.04	0.87	-0.08	0.09
Lower secondary education	-0.60	0.85	-0.02	0.04
Upper secondary education	-0.47	0.85	0.02	0.02

Post secondary education	-0.12	0.91	-0.02	0.03
First tertiary education	-0.14	0.86	-0.02	0.03
Second tertiary education	1.48	1.20	-0.04	0.03
Low Skilled White Collar	-0.43	0.65	-0.02	0.04
High Skilled White Collar	0.57	0.61	0.02	0.02
Professional	-0.44	0.52	-0.02	0.03
Manager	-0.38	0.54	-0.02	0.03
Blue Collar	-0.71	0.51	-0.04	0.03
Trust National Parliament	0.32	0.21	0.01	0.01
Trust Politicians	0.13	0.30	0.01	0.01
Trust Party	0.04	0.31	0.00	0.02
Political interest very interested	0.88*	0.33	0.03*	0.01
Political interest quite interested	0.80*	0.28	0.03*	0.02
Political interest hardly interested	0.43	0.28	0.02	0.01
Life Satisfaction Not Very	-0.28	0.40	-0.02	0.02
Life Satisfaction Fairly	0.19	0.19	0.01	0.01
Life Satisfaction Very	0.45	0.25	0.02*	0.01
National Government Satisfaction Rather Bad	0.26	0.20	0.01	0.01
National Government Satisfaction Rather Good	0.25	0.26	0.01	0.01
National Government Satisfaction Very Good	-0.28	0.54	-0.02	0.03
National Democracy Satisfaction Rather Bad	0.04	0.23	0.00	0.01
National Democracy Satisfaction Rather Good	-0.04	0.27	0.00	0.01
National Democracy Satisfaction Very Good	0.05	0.38	0.00	0.02
Belgium	-0.30	0.49	-0.02	0.03
Denmark	-0.28	0.50	-0.02	0.03
Deutschland	-0.78	0.45	-0.04	0.03
Greece	0.28	0.54	0.01	0.02
Spain	0.08	0.53	0.00	0.02
France	-1.24*	0.45	-0.09	0.05
Netherlands	-0.65	0.49	-0.04	0.04

United Kingdom	-1.57**	0.45	-0.13*	0.06
Finland	-1.14*	0.45	-0.09	0.05
Sweden	-0.44	0.46	-0.03	0.03
Czech Republic	-1.47*	0.47	-0.13	0.07
Hungary	0.21	0.55	0.01	0.02
Latvia	-1.13*	0.55	-0.09	0.06
Poland	-0.93	0.50	-0.07	0.05
Slovenia	-1.43*	0.46	-0.13	0.07
Romania	-1.15*	0.49	-0.09	0.06
Constant	-1.19	1.30	-	-
Observation number, Pseudo R ²	6146	14%	6146	14%

Note: * significant at 5%; ** significant at 1%

Ref. Variables: Extreme Left, Other Civil Status, Stopped education before/at 15 years old, Farmer and Fishermen, Political interest: not interested, Life satisfaction: not satisfied, National Government Satisfaction: bad, National Democracy Satisfaction: bad, Portugal.